

Myths and Facts

ABOUT WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

MYTH 1:

Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers compensation insurance rates.

FACT:

Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization's accident experience, not on whether workers have disabilities.

MYTH 2:

Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.

FACT:

Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.

MYTH 3:

Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thus making them a bad employment risk.

FACT:

In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found 90% rated average or better in job performance compared to 95% for employees without disabilities.

MYTH 4:

Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities.

FACT:

Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network have shown that 15% of accommodations cost nothing, 51% cost between \$1 and \$500, 12% cost between \$501 and \$1,000, and 22% cost more than \$1,000.

MYTH 5:

Employees with disabilities are more likely to have accidents on the job than employees without disabilities.

FACT:

In the 1990 DuPont study, the safety records of both groups were identical.

MYTH 6:

It is impossible to determine a fair salary range for workers with disabilities.

FACT:

This is simple. Employees with disabilities should receive prevailing wages and benefits based on productivity and job performance.

MYTH 7:

There is nothing I can do if an individual with disabilities is not the right fit or doesn't work out in my organization.

FACT:

This is the statement everyone is afraid to articulate. They are really trying to say, "I can't fire a worker with disabilities if he doesn't work out." The ADA's intent is to ensure that individuals with disabilities are given the same opportunities and treatment as everybody else. Employers are not expected or encouraged to go easy on workers with disabilities. They should meet the same performance expectations and be subject to the same disciplinary actions as any employee. If they are not doing the job or are falling short of the workplace's criteria, they should be coached, counseled, disciplined and, if necessary, terminated based upon established policies. Just as individuals with disabilities deserve equal consideration in the employment arena, they must be held accountable to the standards and expectations of their employment.

Information provided by the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Myths are roadblocks that interfere with the ability of persons with disabilities to have equality in employment. These roadblocks usually result from a lack of experience and interaction with persons with disabilities. This lack of familiarity has nourished negative attitudes concerning employment of persons with disabilities. Listed are some common myths and the facts that tell the real story.